

The Wisdom of the East Series

EDITED BY

L. CRANMER-BYNG

Dr. S. A. KAPADIA

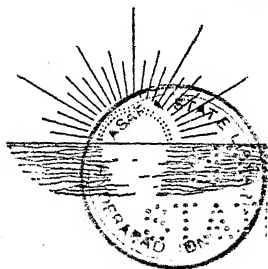
ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN INDIAN POETRY

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WISDOM OF THE EAST

ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN INDIAN POETRY

EDITED BY
GWENDOLINE GOODWIN



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PREFACE

FRANCIS BACON it was who said, "Prefaces are great wastes of time, and tho' they seem to proceed of modesty, they are bravery." It is necessary, however, in the present instance to make a stand against the somewhat sweeping convictions of the Elizabethan master. The call of Youth in India is a hot young call, trumpeting down the ages through a maze of polytheistic tribute, and emerging in the twentieth century with some of its original clearness of sound drowned by a Gargantuan thunder of Western drums. The Indian poet of to-day is torn, like the Indian painter, between admiration for Western models and a desire to mould himself thereon, and an inherent Indian tradition that runs in his veins and will not be denied. Indeed, it is pity to deny it. Sir Edmund Gosse persuaded Sarojini Naidu to tear up her poems about English life and to write of her own Indian bazaars and cities, villages and festivals, for which persuasion we are indeed indebted to Sir Edmund. We of the West do not want from the East poetic edifices built upon a foundation

of Yeats and Shelley and Walt Whitman. We want genuine Taj Mahals and Juma Masjids, cameos of rural sweetness and the hopes of faithful hearts. We want to hear the flute of Krishna as Radha heard it, to fall under the spell of the blue god "in the lotus-heart of dreams." For there is much to learn from the melody of Eastern thought. It is, perhaps, a minor melody born of the mating of Love and Death, but it has its seed in an innate spiritual rapture that no Western veneer can wholly cover.

In the bulk of Indian poetry religious feeling predominates, as is only natural in a country of many but steadfast faiths.

"To act, to think, to feel aright until
He knows his will as one with Allah's will."

Subjugation of the Self leading to a merging of that Self with God. India writes largely from the "Inner Vision." This disallows of foreign influence, but the poet is necessarily inspired as well by an everyday atmosphere which he enriches from the strength of his own perception. The steps of the bathing-ghâts in Calcutta may be of Sheffield cast-iron, but the country that could produce a Taj Mahal—"stone turned into a dream," D. G. Mukerji calls it—will never lose the innate artistic vision of her soul. So the creative prayers of this mighty cosmopolitan multitude surge upwards in a song of glory till they reach the stars. Love of life is love of art

because life is art and art is life. We chase after fleeting perfection, a rosy cloud, a glint of eternity in a lily-pool, a drop of dew trembling on a flower-petal, moments of heaven in worlds of chaos. To catch a mood of Nature and transfer it to paper; to wring from the heart of an instrument one swift emotional phase after another: is it futile? is it useless?

“Am I one of the trees in the night,
Or are the trees human beings?”

asks Harindranath Chattopadhyaya in one of his poems not published here, echoing the cry of Li Po:

“Chuang Chou in a dream became a butterfly
And the butterfly became Chuang Chou at waking:
Which was the real, the butterfly or the man?”

In Indian poetry, the mystic element shines through the outer decorative aspect.

“Our dreams and longings cover deeper dreams
And longings in the silence far away.”

We are roused from the beautiful lyrical lilt of Chattopadhyaya and of his sister, Sarojini Naidu, by the thunder of Muhammad Iqbal's persuasive eloquence. He is a barrister-at-law at Lahore, an active Moslem opposed to Platonic illusion and non-progressive idealism.

“Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,
Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.
His Pegasus went astray in the darkness of philosophy
And galloped over the mountains of Being.
He was so fascinated by the Ideal
That he made head, eye, and ear of no account.”

Whether one agrees with his outlook or not, the fact remains that one cannot fail to be stirred by the intensely fiery spirit of Iqbal's rhetorical writing. He is a leader. He sweeps everything before him like a great wind swirling through a forest of pines. He would re-create Islam, an active, non-Imperialistic, non-sensual Islam. In his own words, he is "the voice of the poet of To-morrow." As Mr. R. A. Nicholson (his translator) says, the book "Asrar-i-Khudi" (Secrets of the Self), from which I have taken the extracts, "presents certain obscurities which no translation can entirely remove." That is, of course, to European readers or to those not conversant with Persian poetry. For the book was originally written in Persian.

"Although the language of Hind is sweet as sugar,
Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech."

He is an inspiring philosopher.

"Thou art fire : fill the world with thy glow !
Make others burn with thy burning !

Up, and re-inspire every living soul ! "

I have spoken of the Youth of India, but the contributors to this volume range in age from the twenties to the seventies. There is little need for me to speak of Rabindranath Tagore. Mr. Edward Thompson (to whom I am indebted for the three translations) has acted in a Boswellian capacity, and the poet is as well known

in England as are the great poets of our own nationality. I would draw attention, however, to the beautiful concluding lines of "Urvasi":

"On the night of full moon, when the world brims with
laughter,
Memory, from somewhere far away, pipes a flute that
brings unrest,
The tears gush out!
Yet in that weeping of the spirit Hope wakes and lives;
Ah, Unfettered One!"

The flute-call of memory bringing restlessness and a strange peace on its liquid cadences. And a dimness of tears to stir the dust of Hope to life. "Ah, Unfettered One!" I have included some translations of Indian songs as sung by native singers, because I thought they might be of interest from an indigenous point of view. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass., is responsible for their English rendering. The one commencing "Quietly come, O Beauty, come," has a mystical meaning. We drift then into the Punjab, the Land of Five Waters, and find Puran Singh, the Sikh poet, breathing the musk of God-love through nostrils ever open to receive a spiritual fragrance.

"The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows."

It blows the perfume of the Beauty that is Worship into the heart of this devout enthusiast. His mind is a casket that holds the most precious gems of the Sikh religion and ideals, and gives

them forth to an unenlightened world. Nanak, Gobind, Teg Bahadur, the names of the Ten Masters (whose lives he has written) sound in his ears day and night.

The loneliness of exile rings through the quivering poems of Manmohan Ghose.

"Lost is that country, and all but forgotten
'Mid these chill breezes . . ."

All true poets love trees ; Manmohan Ghose is no exception :

"Willow sweet, willow sad, willow by the river,
Taught by pensive love to droop, where ceaseless waters
shiver."

Mrs. Pankajini Basu is represented by one poem, "Basanta Panchami," a description of the famous Spring Festival. One line, in particular, stands out : "Ever sorrowful, ever ill-starred, are we women of Bengal, all of us," and, one might add, ever devout, ever faithful. The eternal question of Indian womanhood cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. Mrs. Naidu's lines :

"What further need hath she of loveliness
Whom Death hath parted from her lord's caress ?"

seem to strike at the heart of the matter. Time alone will solve a problem which at the moment is very vexed indeed. It would seem almost that in their poems these Indian women express all the fullness of their hearts in love-songs, hymns of conjugal devotion, lamentations, praise of

physical beauty, and tributes of faith. Emotional outlets of warm, loyal natures, yet always with the underlying sadness that is the birthright of Hind, like an anthem at evening or the eyes of a convent sister. Melancholy glides like pearly vapour through "The Island Grave" of Sri Aurobindo Ghose :

"And I will meet thee in that lonely place,
Then the grey dawn shall end my hateful days
And death admit me to the silent ways."

Death, to the Oriental, is a small and yet a great matter. He welcomes rather than fears it. The body, being but the shell of the soul, is of little account, save, perhaps, for its procreative value as a creator of further beings in the image of God. Death, then, is a joyful thing, and there is but a thin line between the wedding-song and the funeral dirge.

The blue bird of truth is flying against a sky of such intense blueness as to be almost indistinguishable—Ananda Acharya's "blue of Indra." This poet sends his "snow-blossoms" of Indian thought forth from the cool earth of Norway. He lives there amid his "Arctic Swallows," and in his later work has grafted Asian feeling, in a curious way, upon a shoot of Scandinavian origin. There is, of course, a strange affinity between the Nordic peoples and the Asian. The strain flowed through Northern Russia, south to Persia, and thence into India,

the type gradually changing from blue-eyed, fair-skinned folk to olive skins and "flaming eyes, like thunder skies. So deep and dark. . . ."

Jehangir Jivaji Vakil's three little poems have not hitherto been published. The one commencing "O long black hair of love" has an almost Japanese brevity, and compresses into four lines quite a wealth of ardent feeling.

India is rich in legendary history and does not lack for romantic and dramatic episodes in her actual chronicles. I have, nevertheless, found little of the narrative style of poetry among the modern poets. Historical and legendary references are occasionally met with, but they are usually incidental, and little use has been made of a richly-equipped storehouse. Adi K. Sett has utilised this method in "Roshanara," Inayat Khan in "Tansen," and Tagore (in a measure) in "Urvashi." Apparently the lyrical style or the sonnet-form has the greatest appeal.

Narayan Vaman Tilak was a Christian mystic. His poems breathe all the fervour of the convert.

"Saith Dasa, Christ, upon Thy pallet-bed
Grant me a little space to lay my head."

I have included Zahir, Ghalib, and Amir, because, though not modern in a strict sense, as is, say, Fredoon Kabraji, they have been translated by living people, namely, Mrs. J. D. Westbrook and Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

Whether this is the dawn-time of a new era of Indian poetic thought, who shall say? These Eastern singers, Bengali, Punjabi, Hindu, Moham-medan, Sikh, Christian, have upon their shoulders a yoke of heavy responsibility. They have to support and become worthy of the mighty tradition that lies behind them. Song should be theirs naturally, but it is one thing to preserve the metre in their own particular tongues and another to wrestle with the technicalities of English. There are many more modern poets in India from whom I might have chosen, but the scope of the book forbids the inclusion of more material.

The Indian twilight descends, gentle and swift,
“wizard clocks ring out and rend the calm.”
The dark rich blue of night, peridot-studded,
swings a baby-moon high above inky palm and
gleaming tomb. The poet sits in contemplation.
“The lotus dreams upon the lyric melodies of
day. . . .”

GWENDOLINE GOODWIN.

SHEFFIELD,

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“The Broken Wing.”

“The Bird of Time.”

3. *Blackwell (Oxford)*

Poems of Manmohan Ghose.

Mr. Laurence Binyon.

4. “*Poetry Review*” (Mr. Galloway Kyle)

Poems by Mrs. Elsa Kazi.

5. *Longmans, Green & Co.*

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“Krishna’s Flute”

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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE object of the Editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that, in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West—the old-world of Thought and the new of Action. In this endeavour, and in their own sphere, they are but followers of the highest example in the land. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

S. A. KAPADIA.

NORTHBROOK SOCIETY,
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S.W.7.

ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN INDIAN POETRY

AN INVOCATION

O, THOU art as the soul in the body of the universe,

Thou art our soul and Thou art ever fleeing from us.

Thou breathest music into Life's lute ;

Life envies Death when death is for thy sake.

Once more bring comfort to our sad hearts !

Once more dwell in our breasts !

Once more let us hear Thy call to honour !

Strengthen our weak love.

We are oft complaining of destiny,

Thou art of great price and we have naught.

Hide not Thy fair face from the empty-handed !

Sell cheap the love of Salman and Bilál !

Give us the sleepless eye and the passionate heart !

Give us again the nature of quicksilver !

Show unto us one of Thy manifest signs,

That the necks of our enemies may be bowed !
Make this chaff a mountain crested with fire,
Burn with our fire all that is not God !
When the people let the clue of Unity go from
their hands,

They fell into a hundred mazes.
We are dispersed like stars in the world ;
Though of the same family, we are strange to one
another.

Bind again these scattered leaves,
Revive the law of love !
Take us back to serve Thee as of old,
Commit Thy cause to them that love thee !
We are travellers : give us devotion as our goal !
Give us the strong faith of Abraham !
Make us know the meaning of " There is no god " !
Make us acquainted with the mystery of " except
Allah " !

I, who burn like a candle for the sake of others,
Teach myself to weep like the candle.

O God ! a tear that is heart-enkindling,
Passionful, wrung forth by pain, peace-consuming,
May I sow in the garden, and may it grow into a
fire

That washes away the firebrand from the tulip's
robe !

My heart is with yestereve, my eye is on to-
morrow :

Amidst the company I am alone.

" Everyone fancies he is my friend,

But my secret thoughts have not escaped from
my heart."

O, where in the wide world is my comrade ?

I am the Bush of Sinai : where is my Moses ?

I am tyrannous, I have done many a wrong to
myself,

I have nourished a flame in my bosom,

A flame that seized the furniture of judgment,

And cast fire on the skirt of discretion,

And lessened with madness the reason,

And burned up the existence of knowledge :

Its blaze enthrones the sun in the sky,

And lightnings encircle it with adoration for ever.

Mine eye fell to weeping, like dew,

Since I was entrusted with that hidden fire.

I taught the candle to burn openly,

While I myself burned unseen by the world's
eye.

At last flames breathed from every hair of me,

Fire dropped from the veins of my thought :

My nightingale picked up the spark-grains

And created a fire-tempered song.

Is the breast of this age without a heart ?

Majnún trembles lest Lailá's howdah be empty.

It is not easy for the candle to throb alone :

Ah ! is there no moth worthy of me ?

How long shall I wait for one to share my grief ?

How long must I search for a confidant ?

O Thou whose face lends light to the moon and the
stars,

Withdraw Thy fire from my soul !
Take back what Thou hast put in my breast,
Remove the stabbing radiance from my mirror,
Or give me one old comrade
To be the mirror of mine all-burning love !
In the sea wave tosses side by side with wave :
Each hath a partner in its emotion.
In heaven star consorts with star,
And the bright moon lays her head on the knees
of Night.

Morning touches Night's dark side,
And To-day throws itself against To-morrow.
One river loses its being in another,
A waft of air dies in perfume.
There is dancing in every nook of the wine-house,
Madman dances with madman.
Howbeit in Thine essence Thou art single,
Thou hast decked out for Thyself a whole world.
I am as the tulip of the field,
In the midst of a company I am alone.
I beg of Thy grace a sympathising friend,
An adept in the mysteries of my nature,
A friend endowed with madness and wisdom,
One that knoweth not the phantom of vain
things,

That I may confide my lament to his soul
And see again my face in his heart.
His image I will mould of mine own clay,
I will be to him both idol and worshipper.

Muhammad Iqbal.

THE SECRETS OF THE SELF

PROLOGUE

WHEN the world-illuming sun rushed upon Night
like a brigand,

My weeping bedewed the face of the rose,
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of the
narcissus,

My passion wakened the grass and made it grow.
The Gardener taught me to sing with power,
He sowed a verse and reaped a sword.

In the soil he planted only the seed of my tears,
And wove my lament with the garden, as warp
and woof.

Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine :
Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.

My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup,
It knows things that are yet unborn in the world.
My thought hunted down and slung from the
saddle a deer

That has not yet leaped forth from the covert of
non-existence.

Fair is my garden ere yet the leaves are green :
Full-blown roses are hidden in the skirt of my
garment.

I struck dumb the musicians where they were
gathered together,

I smote the heartstrings of all that heard me,

Because the lute of my genius hath a rare melody :
Even to comrades my song is strange.

I am born in the world as a new sun,
I have not learned the ways and fashions of the
sky :

Not yet have the stars fled before my splendour,
Not yet is my quicksilver astir ;

Untouched is the sea by my dancing rays,
Untouched are the mountains by my crimson hue.

The eye of existence is not familiar with me ;

I rise trembling, afraid to show myself.

From the East my dawn arrived and routed Night,

A fresh dew settled on the rose of the world.

I am waiting for the votaries that rise at dawn :

Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire !

I have no need of the ear of To-day,

I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow.

My own age does not understand my deep meanings ;

My Joseph is not for this market.

I despair of my old companions,

My Sinai burns for sake of the Moses who is
coming.

Their sea is silent, like dew,

But my dew is storm-ridden, like the ocean.

My song is of another world than theirs :

This bell calls other travellers to take the road.

How many a poet after his death

Opened our eyes when his own were closed,

And journeyed forth again from nothingness

THE SECRETS OF THE SELF 29

When roses blossomed o'er the earth of his grave !
Albeit caravans have passed through this desert,
They passed, as a camel steps, with little sound.
But I am a lover : loud crying is my faith :
The clamour of Judgment Day is one of my
minions.

My song exceeds the range of the chord,
Yet I do not fear that my lute will break.
'Twere better for the waterdrop not to know my
torrent,

Whose fury should rather madden the sea.
No river will contain my Oman :
My flood requires whole seas to hold it.
Unless the bud expand into a bed of roses,
It is unworthy of my spring-cloud's bounty.
Lightnings slumber within my soul,

I sweep over mountain and plain.

Wrestle with my sea, if thou art a plain ;
Receive my lightning, if thou art a Sinai.
The Fountain of Life hath been given me to
drink,

I have been made an adept of the mystery of
Life.

The speck of dust was vitalised by my burning
song :

It unfolded wings and became a firefly.
No one hath told the secret which I will tell
Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine.

Come, if thou wouldst know the secret of ever-
lasting life !

Come, if thou wouldst win both earth and heaven !
The old *Gûru* of the Sky taught me this lore,
I cannot hide it from my comrades.

O Saki ! arise and pour wine into the cup,
Clear the vexation of Time from my heart !
The sparkling liquor that flows from Zemzem—
Were it a beggar, a king would pay homage to it.
It makes thought more sober and wise,
It makes the keen eye keener,
It gives to a straw the weight of a mountain,
And to foxes the strength of lions.
It causes dust to soar to the Pleiades
And a drop of water swell to the breadth of the
sea.

It turns silence into the din of Judgment Day,
It makes the foot of the partridge red with blood
of the hawk.

Arise and pour pure wine into my cup,
Pour moonbeams into the dark night of my
thought,

That I may lead home the wanderer
And imbue the idle looker-on with restless im-
patience ;

And advance hotly on a new quest
And become known as the champion of a new
spirit ;

And be to people of insight as the pupil to the eye,
And sink into the ear of the world, like a voice ;
And exalt the worth of Poesy
And sprinkle the dry herbs with my tears.

Inspired by the genius of the Master of Rum,
 I rehearse the sealed book of secret lore.
 His soul is the source of the flames,
 I am but as the spark that gleams for a moment.
 His burning candle consumed me, the moth ;
 His wine overwhelmed my goblet.
 The Master of Rum transmuted my earth to gold
 And clothed my barren dust with beauty.
 The grain of sand set forth from the desert,
 That it might win the radiance of the sun.
 I am a wave, and I will come to rest in his sea,
 That I may make the glistening pearl mine own.
 I who am drunken with the wine of his song
 Will draw life from the breath of his words.
 'Twas night : my heart would fain lament,
 The silence was filled with my cries to God.
 I was complaining of the sorrows of the world
 And bemoaning the emptiness of my cup.
 At last mine eye could endure no more,
 Broken with fatigue it went to sleep.
 There appeared the Master, formed in the mould
 of Truth,
 Who wrote the Koran of Persia.
 He said, " O frenzied lover,
 Take a draught of love's pure wine.
 Strike the chords of thine heart and rouse a
 tumultuous strain,
 Dash thine head against the cupping-glass and
 thine eye against the lancet !
 Make thy laughter the source of a hundred sighs,

Make the hearts of men bleed with thy tears !
How long wilt thou be silent, like a bud ?
Sell thy fragrance cheap, like the rose !
Tongue-tied, thou art in pain :
Cast thyself upon the fire, like rue !
Like the bell, break silence at last, and from every
limb

Utter forth a lamentation !
Thou art fire : fill the world with thy glow !
Make others burn with thy burning !
Proclaim the secrets of the old wine-seller ;
Be thou a surge of wine, and the crystal cup thy
robe !

Shatter the mirror of fear,
Break the bottles in the bazaar !
Like the reed-flute, bring a message from the reeds ;
Give to Majnún a message from Lailá !
Create a new style for thy song,
Enrich the feast with thy piercing strains !
Up, and re-inspire every living soul !
Say ' Arise ! ' and by that word quicken the
living !

Up, and set thy feet on another path ;
Put aside the passionate melancholy of old !
Become familiar with the delight of singing ;
O bell of the caravan, awake ! "

At these words my bosom was enkindled
And swelled with emotion like the flute ;
I rose like music from the string
To prepare a Paradise for the ear.

I unveiled the mystery of the Self
 And disclosed its wondrous secret.
 My being was as an unfinished statue,
 Uncomely, worthless, good for nothing.
 Love chiselled me : I became a man
 And gained knowledge of the nature of the
 universe.

I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky,
 And the blood coursing in the veins of the moon.
 Many a night I wept for Man's sake
 That I might tear the veil from Life's mysteries,
 And extract the secret of Life's constitution
 From the laboratory of phenomena.
 I who give beauty to this night, like the moon,
 Am as dust in devotion to the pure Faith [Islam]—
 A Faith renowned in hill and dale,
 Which kindles in men's hearts a flame of undying
 song :

It sowed an atom and reaped a sun,
 It harvested a hundred poets like Rumi and Attar.
 I am a sigh : I will mount to the heavens ;
 I am a breath, yet am I sprung of fire.
 Driven onward by high thoughts, my pen
 Cast abroad the secret of this veil,
 That the drop may become co-equal with the sea
 And the grain of sand grow into a Sahara.
 Poetising is not the aim of this *masnavi*,
 Beauty-worshipping and love-making is not its
 aim.

I am of India : Persian is not my native tongue ;

I am like the crescent moon : my cup is not full.
Do not seek from me charm of style in exposition,
Do not seek from me Khansar and Isfahan.
Although the language of Hind is sweet as sugar,
Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech.
My mind was enchanted by its loveliness,
My pen became as a twig of the Burning Bush.
Because of the loftiness of my thoughts,
Persian alone is suitable to them.
O Reader, do not find fault with the wine-cup,
But consider attentively the taste of the wine.
Muhammad Iqbal.

WORSHIP

You flood my music with your autumn silence
And burn me in the flame-burst of your spring.
Lo ! through my beggar-being's tattered garments
Resplendent shines your crystal heart, my King !
Like a rich song you chant your red-fire sunrise,
Deep in my dreams, and forge your white-flame
moon . . .
You hide the crimson secret of your sunset,
And the pure golden message of your moon.
You fashion cool-grey clouds within my body,
And weave your rain into a diamond mesh.
The Universal Beauty dances, dances
A glimmering peacock in my flowering flesh !
Harindranath Chattopadhyaya.

The kine will graze on the river-bank,
The children will play in the courtyards,

The birds will sing on.

Yet this day will pass,

This day will pass.

This is my prayer,

My prayer to Thee :

That ere I go I may learn

Why the green Earth,

Lifting her eyes to the sky,

Called me to her ;

Why the silence of the Night

Told me of the stars,

Why the Day's glory

Raised waves in my soul.

This is my prayer to Thee.

When Earth's revolutions

For me are ended,

In the finishing of my song

Let me pause a moment,

That I may fill my basket

With the flowers and fruits of the Six

Seasons ; ¹

That in the light of this life

I may see Thee in going,

That I may garland Thee in going

With the garland from my own throat—

When Earth's revolutions for me are ended.

Rabindranath Tagore.

¹ India has six seasons to our four.

URVASI¹

THOU art not Mother, art not Daughter, art not
Bride !

Thou beautiful, comely One,
O Dweller in Paradise, Urvasi !

When Evening descends on the pastures, drawing
about her tired body her golden cloth,

Thou lightest the evening lamp within no home.

With hesitant, wavering steps, with throbbing
breast and downcast look,

Thou dost not go, smiling, fearful, to any beloved's
bed,

In the hushed midnight.

Like the rising Dawn, thou art unveiled,

Unshrinking One !

¹ Urvasi, in older (i.e. Sanskrit) mythology, is a famous courtesan and dancing-girl at the court of Indra, King of the Gods. Her adventures were many ; she was often sent to lure sages aside from their devotions, lest they obtained super-divine powers and threatened the dominion of the Gods (see stanza 4). But in Tagore's poem she is very much more than her legendary character. The poem is a tangle—Indian mythology, modern science, European romance. She is the cosmic spirit of life, in the mazes of its eternal dance ; she is Beauty dissociated from all human relationships ; she is that world-enchancing Love which (though not in Dante's sense) "moves the sun and other stars," is Lucretius's *hominum divumque voluptas*, *Alma Venus*, is Swinburne's "perilous goddess," "sea-foam-born."

I have adopted a quasi-metrical form which I hope will indicate the general outline of the stanza in which this magnificent ode is written.

Like some stemless flower, blooming in thyself,
When didst thou blossom, Urvasi ?

That primal Spring, thou didst arise from the
churning of Ocean,¹

In thy right hand nectar, venom in thy left.

The swelling, mighty Sea, like a serpent tamed
with spells,

Drooping his thousand, towering hoods,

Fell at thy feet !

White as the *kunda* ² blossom, a naked beauty,
adored by the King of Gods,

Thou flawless One !

Wast thou never bud, never maiden of tender
years,

O eternally youthful Urvasi ?

Sitting alone, under whose dark roof

Didst thou know childhood's play, toying with
gems and pearls ?

At whose side, in some chamber lit with the
flashing of gems,

Lulled by the chant of the sea-waves, didst thou
sleep, in coral bed,

A smile on thy pure face ?

¹ When the Gods churned the Ocean, to recover the lost nectar of immortality, Urvasi first appeared, one of many good and bad things that came to light. With the nectar came out poison, which threatened the life of all creatures, till Siva drank it to save the worlds. Tagore has invented Urvasi's responsibility for the nectar and poison being brought forth; at any rate, I know of no other authority for line 4 of this stanza.

² A jasmine.

That moment when thou awakdest into the
universe, thou wast framed of youth,
In full-blown beauty !

From age to age thou hast been the world's
beloved,

O unsurpassed in loveliness, Urvasi !
Breaking their meditation, sages lay at thy feet
the fruits of their penance ;
Smitten with thy glance, the three worlds¹ grow
restless with youth ;
The blinded winds blow thine intoxicating
fragrance around ;
Like the black bee, honey-drunken, the infatuated
poet wonders, with greedy heart,
Lifting chants of wild jubilation !
While thou . . . thou goest with jingling anklets
and waving skirts,
Restless as lightning !

In the assembly of Gods, when thou dancest in
ecstasy of joy,

O swaying Wave, Urvasi !
The companies of billows in mid-ocean swell and
dance, beat on beat ;
In the crests of the corn the skirts of Earth
tremble ;

¹ In Sanskrit mythology, heaven, the atmosphere, and earth ; in later mythology, generally heaven, earth, and the underworld.

From thy necklace stars fall off, in the sky ;
Suddenly in the breast of man the heart forgets
 itself,
 The blood dances !
Suddenly in the horizon thy zone bursts,
 Ah, wild in abandon !

On the Sunrise Mount of Heaven thou art the
 embodied Dawn,
 O world-enchanting Urvasi !
The slimness of thy form is washed with the tears
 of the Universe ;
The ruddy hue of thy feet is painted with the
 heart's blood of the three worlds ;
Thy tresses disrobed from their braid, thou hast
 placed thy light feet,
Thy lotus-feet, on the lotus of the blossomed
 Desires of the universe !
Endless are thy masques in the mind's heaven,
 O Comrade of dreams !

Ah, hear what crying and weeping everywhere
 rises for thee,
 O cruel, deaf Urvasi !
Ah, will that Ancient Prime ever revisit this
 earth ?
From the shoreless, unfathomed deep wilt thou
 ever rise again, with wet locks ?
First in the First Dawn that Form will show !

46 MODERN INDIAN POETRY

In the startled gaze of the universe all thy limbs
 will weep,
 The waters flowing from them !
Suddenly the vast Sea, in songs never heard
 before,
 Will thunder with its waves !

She will not return, she will not return ! That
 Moon of Glory has set,
 She has made her home on the Mount of
 Setting,¹ has Urvashi !
Therefore to-day, on earth, with the joyous
 breath of Spring
Mingles the long-drawn sigh of some eternal
 separation !
On the night of full moon, when the world brims
 with laughter,
Memory, from somewhere far away, pipes a
 flute that brings unrest,
 The tears gush out !
Yet in that weeping of the spirit Hope wakes
 and lives ;
 Ah, Unfettered One !

Rabindranath Tagore.

¹ In Indian mythology, there are Mounts of Sunrise and Sunset.

OPEN THOU THY DOOR OF MERCY

ALL my guilt of old, sin upon sin, put far, far away. Give, O Lord, give in my heart the melody of a new song.

To stir to life my withered, unfeeling heart, near to death and poor, play thy melody on the *vinā*, taking ever a new tune.

As in Nature thy sweetness overflows, so let thy compassion wake in my heart.

In the midst of all things may thy loving face float before my eyes. May no rebel thought against thy wish ever wake in my heart.

Day by day, before I set foot in life's forest, may I crave thy blessing and so advance, my Lord.

Setting thy commands upon my head, may I with unflinching care accomplish my every task in the remembrance of thy feet.

Giving to thee the fruit of my task fulfilled, at the end of day may my wearied spirit and body find rest.

Hurrying have I come from far away, knowing thee compassionate. A hundred hindrances there were to my coming. How many thorns fill the path to my goal. So, to-day, behold! my heart is wounded, my life is dark. Hurrying have I come from far away, knowing thee compassionate.

Open thou thy door of mercy. My raft of life drifts on the boundless ocean. Fearlessness art thou, and ever powerful. Nought have I, I am weak and poor. My heart is thirsting for thy lotus feet. The day is now far spent. Open thou thy door of mercy. My raft of life drifts on the boundless ocean.¹

Hemantabālā Dutt.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

THE DANCER

Lo ! the heavy rain has come ! With loosened tresses densely dark, lo ! the sky is covered. Lightnings rend the thick darkness over the mountains. All around, to my heart's content, I see that beauty has burst forth.

See, frolicsome, she pours forth her loveliness in a thousand streams ! Her raiment, hastily flung around her in disarray, mad passion in her eyes, with the voice of the *pāpiyā*, full of sweetness and pity, she sings.

Slowly move her feet. Slipping, slipping, falls her loosely hanging scarf. Her heart throbs with tumultuous feeling. As if a flood of beauty overflows, her green jacket of emerald grass displays the hue of her radiant beauty all around.

The anklets on her feet, keeping time, ring out

¹ From the *Mādhavī*.

in swift succession, as if they were sweet cymbals. Round her lovely throat hangs her chain of emerald parrots. The rain has ceased and she garbs herself in silken robes brodered with diamond raindrops.

She gladdens the eye. On the treetops birds play on golden tambourines. Is the dancer dancing in Indra's hall, casting restless glances here and there? Urbasī¹ puts off the chain of jewels from her breast.

How gay her laughter! How fair a dance her tinkling footsteps weave! Her bracelets and bangles circle glittering. She is girdled with melody of murmuring swans. For her earth and sky swoon away, overflowing with love.

Her hands touched the *bīnā*² and by her spell enthralled my infatuated heart. Tears stream from my eyes; infatuation floods my heart. The witch to-day has melted my timid heart. Lo! the heavy rain has come.

Nirupamā Debī.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THEE among all men do I honour ;

Thee among all men do I know.

Lo ! in the beauty of all thee do I see.

¹ Sanskrit Urvasī.

² I.e. the *vinā*, the lute.

In the mouth of all I have heard, I have heard
The sweet voice of thy lips.

Thee this time I have sought and found ;
Thee amongst all do I worship ;
Lo ! I for all have given my life.

To the work of all amongst, all
I have devoted my heart.¹

Nirupamā Debī.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

REMEMBRANCE

TO-DAY I shall not indulge in lovers' quarrels.
I shall not open the ledger and calculate debit and
credit.

Only, once again, I shall fill my heart with re-
membrance of thee.²

Priyambadā Debī.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

. THE VISIBLE

DEAREST, I know that thy body is but transi-
tory ; that the kindled life, thy shining eyes,
shall be quenched by the touch of death, I know ;

¹ From the *Kanyādhūp*.

² From the *Patralekha*.

that this thy body, the meeting-place of all beauty, in seeing which I count my life well-lived, shall become but a heap of bones, I know. Yet I love thy body. Day by day afresh through it have I satisfied a woman's love and desire by serving thy feet and worshipping thee. On days of good omen I have decked thee with a flower-garland; on days of woe I have wiped away with my *sārī* end thy tears of grief. O my lord, I know that thy soul is with the Everlasting One; yet waking suddenly some nights I have wept in loneliness, thinking how thou didst drive away my fear, clasping me to thy breast. And so I count thy body as the chief goal of my love, as very heaven.¹

Priyambadā Debī.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

IN THE LIGHT

WE are indeed children of Light. What an endless mart goes on in the Light! In the Light is our sleeping and waking, the play of our life and death.

Beneath one great canopy, in the ray of one great sun, slowly, very slowly, burn the unnumbered lamps of life.

In the midst of this unending Light I lose

¹ From the *Patralekha*.

myself ; amidst this intolerable radiance I wander like one blind.

We are indeed children of Light. Why then do we fear when we see the Light ? Come, let us look all around and see, here no man hath cause for any fear.

In this boundless ocean of Light, if a tiny lamp goes out, let it go ; who can say that it will not burn again ?

Mrs. Kāminī Roy.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

CALL AND BRING HER

SHE went on the wrong way ; she has come back again ; afar off she stands, her head bowed down with shame and fear ; she does not step forward, she cannot raise her eyes—go near, take her hand, call her and bring her.

To-day turn not your face away in silent reproach ; to-day let eyes and words be filled with the nectar of love. What good will come from pouring scorn on the past ? Think of her dark future, take her by the hand and bring her.

Lest for lack of love this shamed soul fling away repentance, bring her, call and bring her. She has come to give herself up ; bind her fast with loving arms ; if she goes to-day, what if she never comes again ?

By one day's neglect, one day's contempt and

anger, you will lose a life for ever. Do you not purpose to give life? Neglect is a poisoned arrow; with sorrowing pardon bring her, call and bring her.

Mrs. Kāminī Roy.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

BASANTA PANCHAMI ¹

TO-DAY, after a year, on the sacred fifth day, Nature has flung away her worn raiment, and with new jewels, see, with fresh buds and new shoots she has begemmed herself and smiles. The birds wing their way, singing with joy; ah, how lovely! The black bee hums as if with sound of "Ulu! ulu!" he wished good fortune to Nature. The south breeze seems to say as it flits from house to house, "To-day Bīnāpāni ² comes here to Bengal." Arrayed in guise that would enrapture even sages, maid Nature has come to worship thy feet, O propitious one! See, O India, at this time all pay no heed to fear of plague, famine, earthquake; all put away pain and grief and gloom; to-day all are drunk with pleasure. For a year Nature was waiting in hope for this day to come. Many folk in many a fashion now summon thee, O white-armed one;

¹ "Spring fifth" is the fifth day of the light fortnight of the month of Māgh, when Sarasvatī, the goddess of letters and wisdom, who loves the *vinā*, lute, is worshipped. The month of Māgh corresponds to January-February.

² I.e. the goddess who carries the *vinā*, or lute, in her hand.

I also have a mind to worship. Thy two feet are red lotuses ; but, say, with what gift shall we worship thee, O mother Bināpāni ? Ever sorrowful, ever ill-starred are we women of Bengal, all of us. Yet if thou have mercy, this utterly dependent one will worship thee with the gift of a single tear of devotion shed on thy lotus feet. Graciously accept that, and in mercy, O white-armed one, grant this blessing on my head on this propitious, sacred day, that this life may be spent in thy worship, Mother.

Pankajinī Basu.

Tr. Miss Whitehouse.

A WOMAN'S BEAUTY

ROUND the black eyes are eyebrows looking like
a bow.

They are not frightened at all, and they shoot
their arrows with certainty.

Seeing the precious ear-rings with pearls and
beautiful settings,

Even the moon with all the stars is filled with
shame.

I cannot describe the beauty of the lips, cheeks,
teeth, and nose,

Even Śesh Nāg,¹ seeing the beautiful hair, sighs
deeply.

Śrī Sarasvatī Devī.

Tr. Mrs. Keay.

¹ The thousand-headed snake of Heaven.

AN EVENING ON THE LAGOON

WITHDRAWN in silence from the raging sea,
 Behind the dark and waving grove of palm
 In glorious solitude at even calm
 We glide at water's edge, towards the lea
 Away from busy haunts ; Eternity
 And Love, the burden of our rapturous psalm,
 As 'neath the star-lit heaven we breathe the
 balm
 Of Nature's stillness, lulling you and me
 To dream in soft ethereal realms of bliss
 Where flits no darkening shadow, dwells no care
 And all is sweetness and ecstatic light,
 The plighted faith renewed with every kiss
 Of fervent gratitude for all our share
 Of blessed weal in life, by day and night.
P. Seshadri.

AT THE TEMPLE

THREE little girls were on the temple-stair
 Waiting for worship at the inner shrine ;
 Their tiny hands betrayed a hidden sign
 Of weariness, devoid of strength to bear
 Their wealth of luscious fruit and offerings rare—
 But still they stood. "What shall the Gods
 assign
 To crown your lives?" I asked, "what blessings
 fine

Will cheer with happiness your faces fair ? ”

“ A mass of glittering jewels,” said one child,

“ Bracelet and necklace, shining gold waist-band

And pearl ear-drop.” “ Fine robes of richest lace

And gayest foam-spun silk,” another willed.

The third, with head bent down and trembling hand,

Whispered, “ A lovely partner on life’s ways.”

P. Seshadri.

RAKSHA BANDHAN

A PIECE of silken tassel tipped with gold,
Tied round the hand by loving sister’s hands,

A sacred day in *Sravan*, when the lands
Are bathed in welcome rain, is said to hold

A potent charm for good. From days of old
This pretty faith has come and happy bands

Of brothers still pay heed to its commands
One day each year. Who will be rashly bold

And flout this festival as void of worth—

An ancient mummery—to which man shows
His slavish piety ? Let him, who knows

Of beings more devoted than the fair,

Of wishes purer than a sister’s care,

And stronger powers than woman’s love on
earth.

P. Seshadri.

LONGINGS

WERE I a mighty Master swaying Art
 In all her lovely forms surpassing fair
 And robed in magic mystery, aware
 Of cunning artist-craft, a mind and heart
 Aglow with Beauty's sacred spark, a part
 Of God's creative light ! If I could share
 The gift of breathing life-infusing air
 In canvas, draw thy rapturous sweetness, start
 The portrait beaming, bright in loveliness ;
 The sculptor's skill—to shape thy limbs divine
 In living marble, show thy beauty's prime !
 Shall I encrowned with laurel, sing for Time,
 Eternity, and Universe, enshrine
 Thy name for ages, scorning storm and stress ?
P. Seshadri.

THOUGHTS

WHEN midnight hours know not the peace of
 sleep
 But drudge in trembling hope for envied fame,
 In ghostly solitude before a flame
 Of glimmering light, whose sombre rays out-peep
 To view the city wrapped in silence deep,
 Midst weird and darkly waving groves of
 palm ;
 When wizard clocks ring out and rend the
 calm

With strides of Time—their thrilling voices creep
Along the soul ; my mind with labour worn,

Or grappling with a knot, delights to stand
In stillness, yearning forth to clasp with love
Thy beauteous form—and then, Spring opes
above !

With blossom'd flow'r and chirping bird, the
land
Smiles 'neath the sunlit hues the heavens adorn !
P. Seshadri.

THE LOVERS

FROM the rose-gardens of Time, fragrant and
fresh, in ecstasies of light—Day has come ! How
many an age of silent love hath breathed and
breathed upon his cheeks that tender flush of
rose ?

The blue in his eyes—from what lakes of
enchantment hath he drunk ? The radiant colours
of his thought—from what infinite wonder hath
he made ? The glory of his love for whom, for
whom hath he brought ? For whom, for whom
the music of his clouds, his winds, his birds ?
The secrets of his soul for whom, for whom ?

A Lotus-bud has opened ; ere she was born
the pain of a vast music did fill and fill her soul
with a vain constant hope ; in the ecstasy of
that pain she bloomed into flower.

The Lotus dreams upon the lyric melodies of Day.

In the sunset hush of evening she folds her petals upon the memories of Day, enwoven with her fragrant devotions.

In the secrecy of Night she sings her praise, making the deeps of the dark melodious.

The glory of his love for whom, for whom doth he bring? For whom, for whom the music of his clouds, his winds, his birds?

The secrets of his soul for whom, for whom?
Fredoon Kabraji.

A BLUE DREAM

WHERE her two lips
Meet or part,
Leaps all my heart
Like the swift ship's
Lurch on the lucent wave—
Past peril and the grave!

Where her two eyes open or close
Upon the rose-kissed snows
Of her face,
From my soul doth rise
Of its grace
A white star in their skies!

But if she smile . . .
Or weave of her mouth a word,

Swiftly a light steals
Half my mind, while
Her word falls all unheard !
And a blue mist reels
Half curtaining my mind,
As a blue dream reels
In the heart of the blind :
Circling a remembrance
Of meadows and streams,
Of blossoms that open and lights that dance,
And passions that struggle to live in dreams !
Fredoon Kabraji.

TULIP

TULIP, tell me, what do you hold in your cup ?

I hold in my cup the magic that swells the
thirst of your soul, O Mother, when you look on
the form of your child ; the opiate that fills your
dream, Mother, with the awe of the Unknown !

But, Tulip, tell me, why do you guard your
magic beyond the wing of melody ?

Because, ere Thought was, a kiss of Love did
capture Death in the Seed of Life. That is
why no melody of Life can hold all the magic
in my cup, Mother ; that is why Love cannot hold
your child in Life alone !

Fredoon Kabraji.

RETURN TO KHAIRPUR

THY greens grow pearls, thy sunsets roses fair ;
 My wandering heart returned to stay with thee,
 In shades of eve, to breathe thy cooler air,
 That brings refreshment, promised long to me.
 I love thy water-wheels, that sing to sleep
 The playful twilight, Autumn's moody child,
 The flames that from thy fields and pinfolds leap
 Like lights that lead the hearts by Pan beguiled.
 I love thy country maids with water-jars
 Whose graceful coveys rural charms enhance.
 I love thy palms that gaze at distant stars,
 And upward draw the earth-encumbered glance.
 I love thy lake with silver trailing flowers,
 Whose wavelets fondly hold the starry skies ;
 The moon, entranced by calm of midnight hours,
 In violet bed on lily-petals lies.
 No more the eyes of homesick longings pine
 To watch the sphere remote where stars abound,
 But, like thy lake that holds its love divine,
 My heart within hath longed-for heaven found.

Elsa Kazi.

INDIA—ENTERTAINING TWILIGHT

To India's comely cottage Twilight hied :
 "Salam, my lass !" resplendent Twilight cried :
 "A sumptuous fare prepare ! . . . since noon I
 tried

To come this way . . . but ah ! the glowing day
did stay

With thee ! . . . Fresh milk and fried chapatis
bring ;

Do not forget thy hubble-bubble, dear,
For lots of dreamy cheer !

From out thy hair the withered lily fling ;

Don fine array, with pearls thy tresses lay, and
play

Thy vīnā, dance and sing !

One stolen hour is mine ; that little while

With haunting notes of *suri-raag* beguile . . .

And let me see thy flaming eyes, as thunder skies

So deep and dark, with mystic lightnings bright ;

With 'Duhals' wake what slumbering lies, the
past let rise

All yesterdays to pageant gay, invite . . .

Be swift, my sweet !

The meat and chutney let us eat . . .

The hour, my sweet,

Is fleet ; from night I must retreat !

Already muezzin's mellow call resounds in mango
grove ;

And temple bells, that wake the gods, the hearts
to worship move ;

Come hither, dear ! . . . The moments flee !

Salam, my love,

Salam ! ”

And India, sun-burnt India, sweetly blushed ;

“Salam ! I’ll hasten !” answered she ; and
brushed

From off her braid the faded lily—crushed
By day’s embrace ; she sped, with joy, her face
a-blaze,

To milk the goats, to fry the cakes in ghee ;
Cabob, pullau, the dates and honey brought
And hubble-bubble sought

With smiles of Sindian hospitality.

With peri-grace she soared about the place, to
- trace

Each thing that added glee

To Twilight’s hour . . . a rich repast she spread
Before her guest, who sliced the mangoes red
’Neath palms, beside the well and stream . . .
his eyes a-gleam

With dusk, he watched where night in forests
hid

And vexed with prying silver beam his crimson
dream,

While India, humming low, her braids undid.

With rustling sound

Unbound, her tresses sought the ground ;

With silvery sound

She wound her pearls in orient found . . .

Her silk-apparel jasmin-decked, kissed rugs of
golden cloth ;

With henna’d hands she swirled her veil, as frail
as wings of moth ;

Her vīnā struck, with bended knee :

"Salam," she quoth :

"Salam !"

She shot as lightning up . . . then paused and
smiled ;

Then round she spun in trance, as dervish wild ;
In rainbow hue she flew, with flowers piled ;

A flame a-whirl, with passion red, each curl
a-twirl,

As Indra's temple-dancer, maddening hearts

Her lips with kisses scarlet !—Eyes aglow

Now moved she sly and slow

As Punjab tigress ere for prey she starts . . .

Then did unfurl a smock as white as pearl . . .
a girl

Of pious Southern parts

She turned, gazellean-soft and meek her glance,

The rosary and censer graced her dance ;

A fragrant bud of womanhood, divinely good ;

But soon her measure ceased . . . with rhythmic
thrill

In Delhi's wealth arrayed she stood, in soaring
mood

Then danced again, to show her perfect skill !

With flourish bold

And gold a-flash, now anklets told,

Her footsteps bold

Controlled a battle march of old !

She forward dashed as amazon of Rajput's desert
side,

Her eyes with valour all a-flame, so proudly did
she stride :

“ Wah ! Wah ! ” so Twilight cheered . . . and
she :

“ Salam,” replied :

“ Salam ! ”

Her Jadoo-veil now changed the scene . . . and lo !
In clouds she danced thro’ Kashmeer’s mountain-
snow,

Thro’ jungle glooms and tombs of gold below ;
By Ganges led, where orchards blossoms shed,
she sped

’Mid Koels as Gopi, or as Rama’s queen . . .

With shimmering ivory limbs, and rubied brow

As Moghul princess now

She sat ’mid slaves on throne of Jasper sheen.

Now made her bed on elephant’s broad head, and
fled

As Jin thro’ plantains green.

Then rose as butterfly from out her shawl

All poised o’er lucid lakes of Taj Mahal.—

The hour had slipped, and night at last approached
so fast ;

And Twilight donned his turban, chilled with
fright . . .

The hookah-stick, he dropped aghast, and India
cast

Her jewelled slipper at her guardian Night

Who gently sailed,

And trailed the stars . . . but Twilight quailed
And westward sailed !
All veiled in mists he drooped and paled !
Her lacquered cradle India spread for moonlit
 night to rest,
Namaskar made with folded hands ! . . . half
 serious, half a-jest,
She fibbered : " Twilight hit at thee . . .
Salam, my best
Salam ! "

Elsa Kazi.

ROSHANARA

The Queen Roshanara is sad and weeps in the
absence of her lord in battle. Her maidens
strive to comfort her :

WITH this, to the couch
Whereon lay the Queen, so shaken
With voices she heard
And dreams she dreamt
And visions she saw.
To her they brought rose-petals
In their hands, and musks in baskets,
Perfuming her. But she was
Terror-stricken still.
Then with a wild clash of
Tambourines they fell to
An air of joyous happiness,

Sweetly soared the voice,
Like that of a nightingale,
Of the chief maiden who
Sang of the wind :

“ North wind and south wind,
West wind and east wind,
Thou shalt not moan,
But blow, blow
Gently on my Lady's cheeks, blow.
And thou, O great sea,
Thou shalt not wail,
But sweetly lull my Lady to sleep.

“ Red leaf and green leaf, and all ye withered
leaves,
Ye shall not turn the lawns into a wilderness,
For my Lady is sad,
And to see ye thus would make her sadder still.
Great trees and small trees,
Ye shall not shake and shiver
When my Lady walks,
But ye shall serve her as a good shade.

“ Great birds and small birds and all ye humming
birds,
Ye shall not wail mourning elegies,
But shall twitter and your little throats shall
quiver
In an ecstasy of delight.

Ye shall sing of sweet joy,
Ye shall make my Lady happy.

“ And ye Fairies and Cherubs,
Ye Queens of the Dreams,
And Kings of the Shadows,
Of the hidden people and the Unknown,
Ye shall not approach my Lady,
For her heart sinks with fright,
And she trembles like a leaf
That is thrown from the branches
With the wind's force.
All ye unknown, be banished
From my Lady, to your land
Of Mystery and Heart's Desire,
To your land of Eternal Youth.”

Adi K. Sett.

IN PRAISE OF HENNA

A KOKILA called from a henna-spray :
Lira ! liree ! Lira ! liree !
Hasten, maidens, hasten away
To gather the leaves of the henna tree.
Send your pitchers afloat on the tide,
Gather the leaves ere the dawn be old,
Grind them in mortars of amber and gold,
The fresh green leaves of the henna tree.

A kokila called from a henna-spray :
Lira ! liree ! Lira ! liree !

Hasten, maidens, hasten away
To gather the leaves of the henna tree.
The *tilka's* red for the brow of a bride,
And betel-nut's red for lips that are sweet ;
But, for lily-like fingers and feet,
The red, the red of the henna tree.

Sarojini Naidu.

IMPERIAL DELHI

IMPERIAL City ! dowered with sovereign grace,
To thy renascent glory still there clings
The splendid tragedy of ancient things,
The regal woes of many a vanquished race ;
And memory's tears are cold upon thy face
E'en while thy heart's returning gladness rings
Loud on the sleep of thy forgotten Kings,
Who in thine arms sought Life's last resting-place.

Thy changing Kings and Kingdoms pass away,
The gorgeous legends of a bygone day,
But thou dost still immutably remain
Unbroken symbol of proud histories,
Unageing priestess of old mysteries
Before whose shrine the spells of Death are vain.

Sarojini Naidu.

DIRGE

(In sorrow of her bereavement)

WHAT longer need hath she of loveliness,
Whom Death has parted from her lord's caress ?
Of glimmering robes like rainbow-tangled mist,
Of gleaming glass or jewels on her wrist,
Blossoms or fillet-pearls to deck her head,
Or jasmine garlands to adorn her bed ?

Put by the mirror of her bridal days. . . .
Why needs she now its counsel or its praise,
Or happy symbol of the henna leaf
For hands that know the comradeship of grief,
Red spices for her lips that drink of sighs,
Or black collyrium for her weeping eyes ?

Shatter her shining bracelets, break the string
Threading the mystic marriage-beads that cling
Loth to desert a sobbing throat so sweet,
Unbind the golden anklets on her feet,
Divest her of her azure veils and cloud
Her living beauty in a living shroud.

Nay, let her be ! . . . what comfort can we give
For joy so frail, for hope so fugitive ?
The yearning pain of unfulfilled delight,
The moonless vigils of her lonely night,
For the abysmal anguish of her tears,
And flowering springs that mock her empty years ?

Sarojini Naidu.

SPRING

YOUNG leaves grow green on the banyan twigs,
 And red on the peepul tree,
 The honey-birds pipe to the budding figs,
 And honey-blooms call to the bee.

Poppies squander their fragile gold
 In the silvery aloe-brake ;
 Coral and ivory lilies unfold
 Their delicate lives on the lake.

Kingfishers ruffle the feathery sedge,
 And all the vivid air thrills
 With butterfly-wings in the wild-rose hedge,
 And the luminous blue of the hills.

Sarojini Naidu.

· CRADLE-SONG

FROM groves of spice,
 O'er fields of rice,
 Athwart the lotus-stream,
 I bring for you,
 Aglint with dew,
 A little lovely dream.

Sweet, shut your eyes,
 The wild fire-flies

MODERN INDIAN POETRY

Dance through the fairy *neem* ;
From the poppy-bole
For you I stole
A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good-night,
In golden light
The stars around you gleam ;
On you I press
With soft caress
A little lovely dream.

Sarojini Naidu.

JUNE SUNSET

HERE shall my heart find its haven of calm,
By rush-fringed rivers and rain-fed streams
That glimmer thro' meadows of lily and palm.
Here shall my soul find its true repose
Under a sunset sky of dreams
Diaphanous, amber, and rose.
The air is aglow with the glint and whirl
Of swift wild wings in their homeward flight,
Sapphire, emerald, topaz, and pearl,
Afloat in the evening light.

A brown quail cries from the tamarisk bushes,
A bulbul calls from the cassia-plume,
And thro' the wet earth the gentian pushes
Her spikes of silvery bloom.

Where'er the foot of the bright shower passes
Fragrant and fresh delights unfold ;
The wild fawns feed on the scented grasses,
Wild bees on the cactus-gold.

An ox-cart stumbles upon the rocks,
And a wistful music pursues the breeze,
From a shepherd's pipe as he gathers his flocks
Under the pipal-trees.
And a young Banjara driving her cattle
Lifts up her voice as she glitters by
In an ancient ballad of love and battle
Set to the beat of a mystic tune,
And the faint stars gleam in the eastern sky
To herald a rising moon.

Sarojini Naidu.

BUNKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI

How hast thou lost, O month of honey and
flowers,
The voice that was thy soul ! Creative showers,
The cuckoo's daylong cry and moan of bees,
Zephyrs and streams and tender-blossoming trees,
And murmuring laughter and heart-easing tears
And tender thoughts and great, and the compeers
Of lily and jasmine and melodious birds,
All these thy children into lovely words
He changed at will and made soul-moving books
From hearts of men and women's honeyed looks.

O master of delicious words ! the bloom
Of *champak* and the breath of king-perfume
Have made each musical sentence with the noise
Of women's ornaments and sweet household joys
And laughter tender as the voice of leaves
Playing with vernal winds. The eye receives,
That reads these lines, an image of delight,
A world with shapes of spring and summer, noon
and night ;

All nature in a page, no pleasing show
But men more real than the friends we know.
O plains, O hills, O rivers of sweet Bengal,
O land of love and flowers, the spring-bird's call
And southern wind are sweet among your trees :
Your poet's words are sweeter far than these.
Your heart was this man's heart. Subtly he knew
The beauty and divinity in you.
His nature kingly was and as a god
In large serenity and light he trod
His daily way, yet beauty, like soft flowers
Wreathing a hero's sword, ruled all his hours.
Thus moving in these iron times and drear,
Barren of bliss and robbed of golden cheer,
He sowed the desert with ruddy-hearted rose,
The sweetest voice that ever spoke in prose.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

A ROSE OF WOMEN

Now lilies blow upon the windy height,
 Now flowers the pansy kissed by tender rain,
 Narcissus builds his house of self-delight
 And Love's own fairest flower blooms again ;
 Vainly your gems, O meadows, you recall ;
 One simple girl breathes sweeter than you all.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

(Meleager.)

THE ISLAND GRAVE

OCEAN is there, and evening ; the slow moan
 Of the blue waves that like a shaken robe
 Two heard together once, one hears alone.

Now gliding white and hushed towards our
 globe
 Keen January with cold eyes and clear
 And snowdrops pendent in each frosty lobe

Ushers the firstborn of the radiant year.

Haply his feet, that grind the breaking mould,
 May brush the dead grass on thy secret bier ;

Haply his joyless fingers wan and cold
 Caress the ruined masses of thy hair,
 Pale child of winter, dead ere youth was old.

Art thou so desolate in that bitter air

That even his breath feels warm upon thy face ?
Ah ! till the daffodil is born, forbear,

And I will meet thee in that lonely place,
Then the grey dawn shall end my hateful days
And death admit me to the silent ways.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

INVITATION

WITH wind and the weather beating round me

Up to the hill and the moorland I go.

Who will come with me ? Who will climb with
me ?

Wade through the brook and tramp through
the snow ?

Not in the petty circle of cities

Cramped by your doors and your walls I dwell ;
Over me God is blue in the welkin,

Against me the wind and the storm rebel.

I sport with solitude here in my regions,

Of misadventure have made me a friend.

Who would live largely ? who would live freely ?

Here to the wind-swept uplands ascend.

I am the lord of tempest and mountain,

I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.

Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger
Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side.
Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

A CHILD'S IMAGINATION

O THOU golden image,
Miniature of bliss,
Speaking sweetly, speaking meetly !
Every word deserves a kiss.

Strange, remote, and splendid
Childhood's fancy pure
Thrills to thoughts we cannot fathom,
Quick felicities obscure.

When the eyes grow solemn
Laughter fades away,
Nature of her mighty childhood
Recollects the Titan play ;

Woodlands touched by sunlight
Where the elves abode,
Giant meetings, Titan greetings,
Fancies of a youthful God.

These are coming on thee
In thy secret thought ;
God remembers in thy bosom
All the wonders that He wrought.
Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

EVENING

A GOLDEN evening, when the thoughtful sun
 Rejects its usual pomp in going, trees
 That bend down to their green companion
 And fruitful mother, vaguely whispering—these
 And a wide silent sea. Such hour is nearest God,
 Like rich old age when the long ways have all
 been trod.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

THE SEA AT NIGHT

THE grey sea creeps half-visible, half-hushed,
 And grasps with its innumerable hands
 These silent walls. I see beyond a rough
 Glimmering infinity, I feel the wash
 And hear the sibilation of the waves
 That whisper to each other as they push
 To shoreward side by side—long lines and dim
 Of movement flecked with quivering spots of
 foam,
 The quiet welter of a shifting world.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

LACHHI

From a well-known Panjābī folk-song

आहा ! When Lachhi spills water,
 Spills water, spills water, spills water,
 There sandal grows—where Lachhi spills water.

Aha ! Lachhi asks the girls,
 The girls, the girls, the girls,
 Oh, what coloured veil suits a fair complexion ?

Aha ! The girls said truly,
 Said truly, said truly, said truly,
 A veil that is black becomes a fair complexion.

What then your fortune, Lachhi ?
 Your fortune, Lachhi, your fortune, Lachhi, your
 fortune, Lachhi ?
 Ho ! your boy like the moon, what then your
 fortune ?

Who'll give you milk to drink, Lachhi ?
 Drink Lachhi, drink Lachhi, drink Lachhi ?
 Your friendship with the goatherds is sundered !
 Who'll give you milk to drink ?

[This song is sung to a purely folk-air, not in
 any definite *rāg*.]

AZMĒ

Note.—The story goes that Gāmī wrote the song about a girl of Kutahār (a village in the Maraz pargana of Kāshmir) named Azmē, and that it became the occasion of trouble for its author. Complaints were made about Gāmī, and his father reported the matter to the Tah-sildār of the district ; but the poet explained

that Azmē meant “to-day” and that the whole song had only a Sufi significance.

Azmē, love of thee came to me, fortunate vision !
Azmē, show me thy face, O darling.

Azmē, love of thee, etc.

Say where shall I wait, in Shāngas or Naugām ?
An ill name I got in Kutahār !

Azmē, love of thee, etc.

I sought thee in Achhaval, Brang, Kutahār—
Lakhs of hardships I suffered, my darling.

Pomegranate thy cheeks, or *saza-posh*—
How dark are thine eyes, my darling !

Shining thy brows as though with sweat—
How many a one thy nose has slain, my darling !

Sitting by the door, choosing saffron flowers,
I know not for whom, my darling !

What a famous spinning-wheel is there in
Kolgām,
Matchless its handle, my darling !

Silver are the strings of thy spinning-wheel,
Those who see it fall ill with wonder, my darling !

Skilfully pounding the rice so fine,
The good shape of the cypress has Azmē, my
darling !

Bright is her dress as a pearl,
Short are the plaits of Azmē, my darling !

Slowly combing her hair so fine—
I will count up thy plaits, my darling !

Kāmader has passed through Kutahār,
All folk to him must yield (?), my darling !

Hapless Māhmud, where shall he wait for thee ?
An ill name I won in Kutahār, my darling !
Māhmud Gāmī.

. AWAKE, MY FRIEND

AWAKE, my friend !
Be glad, spring has come !

Spread jasmine on the balconies,
Lasting is the glory of jasmine !

From afar I saw the Beloved come hither,
That *Houri* came to my courtyard !

Breast to breast he embraced me before the
people,
Openly was his coming to be seen by any !

Ah, burn my blood to clots of fondness,
Accomplish (in my heart) the love of Islam !

These things thou shouldst not reveal among
drunkards,
Lest to-morrow there be reproach !

Māhmud Vāzah will tell the secret of Love,
Hans Rāja shall he be named !

Māhmud Vāzah.

MARRIAGE SONG

SPRING has come, with almond blossom,
All about Shārikā Dēvī !
Flower-beds are walled about—
Flowers I'll offer, night and morn !

Spring has come, with almond blossom,
All about Rāginyā Dēvī !
Lotus flowers are walled about—
Milk I'll pour her, night and morn !

Spring has come, with almond blossom,
All about Zālā Dēvī !
Mint-plants are walled about—
Pūjā I'll make, night and morn !

Spring has come, with almond blossom,
All about Shivajī !

Sandal trees are walled about—
I will anoint Him night and morn !

Spring has come, with almond blossom,
All about Nārāyan !

Tulsi plants are walled about—
Saffron I'll rub night and morn !

Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Note.—By the names Shārikā, Rāginyā, etc., are meant places as well as the divinities worshipped. Thus Shārikā (Satī, Pārvatī) is Hari Parbat, where there is a festival to Shārikā in March ; Rāginyā (Kīr Bavānī) is an island at Inlamul, where there is a festival in May ; Zālā (another form of Pārvatī) is a hill where there is a festival in June ; Shivajī is a village in the Zainager pargana ; Nārāyan is a *tīrtha* near Bāramuta.

MYSTIC LOVE SONG FROM "THIRTY INDIAN SONGS"

Quietly come, O Beauty, come !
O ! cups of wine I'll fill for thee.
Come to our house, O Beauty, come ;
Come as a guest, O Beauty, come :
Quietly come, O Beauty, come !

Borders twain thy veil adorn ;
At early dawn, O Beauty, rise—
Quietly come, O Beauty, come !

A silken border thy veil adorns ;
Father has sent thee a cradle of bells—
Quietly come, O Beauty, come !

Hast thou come from the heavens, O lovely bird ?
Wilt come by thyself, or a snare shall I spread ?
Quietly come, O Beauty, come !

He who made this golden bracelet,
Was he only a goldsmith and never a master of
craft ?
Quietly come, O Beauty, come !

Ananda Coomaraswamy.

THE PUNJAB AUTUMN : THE SEASON OF THE COOLING DEW

(Composed on the birthday of Guru Nanak, 1916)

I

THE piping of the rain-birds has ceased,
Dadar and *peepiya* are silent now,
The dance of the peacock is over,
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

II

The clouds have stopped their thunder,
The lightning has hidden her spark,
The floods of the Punjab rivers have rolled away,
The rivers have shrunk low ;
The storm is over, and the winds blow soft and
slow.

It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

III

The sweet, sweet dew wets all with joy,
Wet with joy are the night and the moon,
And dewdrops quiver over the stars on high,
And joy-wet blows the wind on my face.
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

IV

The cool, soft touches of the falling dew calm my
soul ;
And my mind, blessed with the dew-joys calm
and cool, is at rest !
My beloved ! come to me as the dew of my eyes !

Come to-day as the dew cometh !
And cool my soul parched by the pain of long,
 long separation !
My beloved ! it is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

V

O master of the order of the *Seli* ! ¹
O dweller of heaven !
O great giver !
My Guru Nanak ! Come to me to-day !
O light of lights !
Thy seats are the sun and the moon !
My beloved ! return to me to-day !
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

VI

It is the season of slumber and dew.
Cruel is all separation !
Pray remove the distances that divide me from
 thee.
My beloved ! it is the season of the cooling dew !

¹ *Seli*, or the small round string made of black wool that
Guru Nanak used to wear at times.

The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

VII

My love ! stay no more in distant lands away
from me !

Come into the vacant courtyard of my heart !
Dye my soul with the joys of thy presence,
And make it now thy home.

Stay at home ! Go no more out of me !
Dwell in my soul, before my eyes !

And for ever be there the perennial draught of my
eyes.

My love ! it is the season of the cooling dew !

The dew is falling everywhere,

And wet is every rose.

The gentle breath of heaven blows.

VIII

Fill my tearful gaze for ever with thy celestial
face ;

And let my eyes be for ever wet with the joy
of seeing thee !

My love ! dwell for ever in my eyes !

It is the season of the cooling dew !

The dew is falling everywhere,

And wet is every rose.

The gentle breath of heaven blows.

IX

It is now the dewy season,
The season of the happy meetings of love,
The season of the quenching of all fires of pain.
To me everything seems to be dew-wet ;
From the blue of heaven the dew is falling soft ;
It is the dew of deep, deep unions ;
And wonder and worship is in the eyes.
The separated ones shall meet !
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

X

Now is the time of everlasting embraces !
My beloved ! come, meet me to-day !
Take me to thy bosom !
The dew is flooding things with joy.
My love ! come to me !
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

XI

The dew cometh from heaven down !
It bringeth heavenly peace for all,
It wetteth all with sweetness.
Invisible, it raineth deep into souls,

It raineth love and peace and joy.
It raineth sweetness.
Dew ! dew ! my comrades !
It is the season of the cooling dew !
The dew is falling everywhere,
And wet is every rose.
The gentle breath of heaven blows.

(Trans.) *Puran Singh*
(*Nārgās : Bhai Vir Singh*).

RÂJHANS (THE PRINCE OF SWANS)

RÂJHANS ! The Golden Swan ! Is it thy plumage that shines, or the sunrise on the eternal snows ?

The dweller of *Mân-Sarôwar*, the lake on the roof of the world ! Thy golden beak parts milk from water, in the living stream thou art a liberated soul !

A rosary of spotless pearls is in thy beak, and how sublime is the lofty curve of thy neck against the Heaven's vast azure !

Thou livest on pearls, the nectar drops so pure of Hari Nam.

Great Soul ! lover of the azure transparent Infinite ! Thou canst not breathe out of the *Mân-Sarôwar* air, nor canst thou live out of sight of those loftiest peaks of snow, and away from the diluted perfume of musk blowing from the wild trail of the deer !

Thou art the spirit of Beauty, thou art far

beyond the reach of human thought. Thy isolation reflecteth the glory of the starry sky in thy Nectar Lake of Heart in whose waters the sun daily dips himself !

Thou hast the limitless expanse of air, the companionship of fragrant gods,

And yet we know thou leavest those Fair Abodes to come to share the woes of human love ;

Thou alightest unawares on the grain-filled barn of the humble farmer, awakening Nature's maiden hearts, thou informest love.

It is thy delight to see woman love man, the small ripples of a human heart in love flutter thee in thy lofty seat.

Thou art the soul liberated through love ; thou knowest the worth of love, flying for its sake even midst the cities' smoke and dust, perchance, to save a human soul through love !

“ Sisters of the Spinning-Wheel ” :

Puran Singh.

LATER LYRICS : POPLAR, BEECH, AND WEeping WILLOW

I

SHAPELY poplar, shivering white, poplar like a maiden,

Thinking, musing softly here, so light and so unladen,

POPLAR, BEECH, AND WILLOW 91

That with every breath and stir, perpetually you
gladden,
Teach me your still secrecies of thought that
never sadden.

From the heavy-hearted earth, earth of grief and
passion,
Maiden, would you spring with me, and leave
men's lowly fashion,
Skyward lift with me your thoughts in cumberless
elation,
Every leaf and every shoot a virgin aspiration.

The blue day, the floating clouds, the stars shall
you for palace
Proffer their cathedral pomp, dawn her rosy
chalice.

Where the birds are, you shall throng and revel to
be lonely
In the blue of heaven to spire and sway with
breezes only.

II

Beech, of leafy isles the queen, beech, of trees the
lady,

Soaring to a tower of sighs, in branches soft and
shady,

You that sunward lift your strength, to make of
shadow duty,

Teach me, tree, your heavenly height, and
earth-remembering beauty.

Maiden, would you soar like me, with day-
upclouding tresses,
Beauty into bounty change, bend down the
eye that blesses ;
Make from heaven a shelter cool, to shepherd and
sheep silly
Shadowing with shadiness, hot rose and fainting
lily.

Through your glorious heart of gloom, the noon-
day wind awaking
In an ecstasy shall set swaying, blowing,
shaking ;
Leafy branches, in their nests set the sweet birds
rocking
Till their happy song break out, the noonday
ardour mocking.

Willow sweet, willow sad, willow by the river,
Taught by pensive love to droop, where ceaseless
waters shiver,
Teach me, steadfast sorrower, your mournful
grace of graces ;
Weeping to make beautiful the silent water-
places.

Maiden, would you learn of me the loveliness of
mourning,
Droop into the chill, wan wave, strength,
hardness, lofty scorning ;

Drench your drooping soul in tears, content to
 love and languish,
 Gaze in sorrow's looking-glass, and see the face
 of anguish ?

In the very wash of woe, as your bowed soul
 shall linger,
 You shall touch the sheer, bright stars, and on
 the moon set finger ;
 You shall hear, where brooks have birth, the
 mountain-pine's emotion,
 Catch upon the broadening stream the sound
 and swell of ocean.

Manmohan Ghose.

ORPHIC MYSTERIES : THE YELLOW BUTTERFLY

Of all shy visitants, I love
 That darling butterfly,
 Whose wings are to the cornfield's wave
 A hovering reply.

Yellow as dancing wheat-ears ripe
 He suns with his gay youth,
 And feeds me with the gold of light,
 The thrice-tried gleam of truth.

When, glooming back upon myself,
 The garden path I pace,
 He comes and makes my gladdened eyes
 The dial to his grace.

Unfailing omen, punctual sign !
No sooner am I out,
He hovers by on golden wings
To chase the grey of doubt.

All melancholy thoughts to thresh,
Winnow the blissful grain
Of immortality, and sift
From mortal fear and pain.

Day after day the marvel grows ;
Ever his gladsome morn
Shines down the blackness of my grief
With glancing wings of scorn.

Now from the creeper's bowery height,
Now o'er the garden wall ;
From far-off places, or where first
The wonder did befall.

In that low bed of coxcomb flowers
Beneath her window-sill,
Her chamber-window, where he warms
Homeward my spirit still ;

Or plumb-down from the soaring roof
He to my awful eye
His radiant message angels me
From azure depths of sky.

I cannot with ungrateful heart
 Feel God's fair world a blank.
 Straight for the sunny thought of her
 His yellow wings I thank.

I cannot still, her sight to want,
 Weep like a thwarted boy,
 Cry outright, but with darting gold
 He chides me back to joy.

The stupor of the miracle
 Ever renewed, the fear,
 I lose in charmed tranquillity,
 For she, my saint, is here.

Who works it ? No dead relic sweet
 Of her, my living saint,
 Perfect beyond the skill of thought
 Of fancy's power to paint.

Whole from her suffering martyrdom
 She is arisen. No tomb
 Could hold her, no far blissful heaven
 Allure. Her heaven is home.

No place more holy than these walks,
 This garden, where the flowers
 Swing censers breathing up to God,
 This house a Book of Hours.

No room but memory's sacred hand,
Gilded, illuminate,
Paints how she suffered, loved and died—
The legend of her fate.

In heaven she is ; beatitude
To her ; her loved ones still,
So loving she, here, here, enskyed
To guard. It is God's will.

Here in the old sweet home where, still
A guardian spirit, she
Heals, comforts, counsels, and performs
Her angel ministry.

Manmohan Ghose.

MYVANWY

OFT hast thou heard it, that old true saying,
'Tis like and unlike makes the happiest music.
Then, gravely smiling, scorn me not, Myvanwy,
Fairest of maidens.

Thou who in sunlight sittest, pensive leaning
At the open window, thy hand deep-buried
In dark sweet clusters of thy hair, and gazest
O'er the wide ocean.

Yes, o'er the ocean far, far in the distance,
Is my own country, and other soil bore me

Than thy dear birthplace, other sun than England's
Nourished my spirit.

Yet for this slight not my heart as alien :
What can green England show to match those
regions
Save thyself only, what hath she that merits
Prouder remembrance ?

Nothing ! nor any shore that hears the Ocean,
Nothing can match their beauty ! If Myvanwy
Had but an exile's sad heart in her bosom,
She too would say so.

She too would say so, and back in thought
returning,

How would her sweet eyes fill with tears of glad-
ness,

How would she marvel, the lovely maiden,
Breathless with gazing !

There, stretching lonely, do the giant mountains
Rise with their ages of snows to heaven,
Snows, the heart shudders, so far away seem they,
Fearfully lovely :

There is the tall palm, like her own dear stature,
The land's green lady, and riotously hang there,
All for Myvanwy's lips, the strange, delicious
Fruits of the tropics ;

And the vast elephant that dreams for ages,
Lost among dim leaves and things of old, re-
members :

Would he not, rousing at her name's sweet
rumour,

Pace to behold her ?

Oh me ! what glories would her eyes enkindle,
Eyes with their quick imaginative rapture !
How shall I picture to her all the strangeness,
All the enchantment,

In that enchanted land of noon ? My heart
faints

And my tongue falters : for long ago, Myvanwy,
Deep in the east where now but evening gathers,
Lost is my country.

Long ago hither in passionate boyhood,
Lightly an exile, lightly leagues I wandered
Over the bitter foam : so far Fate led me
Only to love thee.

Lost is that country, and all but forgotten
'Mid these chill breezes, yet still, oh, believe me,
All her meridian suns and ardent summers
Burn in my bosom.

Manmohan Ghose.

KISMET

BEFORE our births, Kussam, who makes our fate,
 Ordained us happy or unfortunate,
 And wrote upon our brow and on our hands
 The signs that tell to him who understands
 Our Destiny, decreed for good or ill.
 So pass the Wise, bending to Allah's will,
 Their lives into His mighty hands resigned.

One child is cherished ; one to hands unkind
 Is given ; one dies in life's first shining dawn ;
 One longs to die, but Death when called upon
 Turns from the supplicating voice his ear ;
 One starves in poverty ; one is Amir
 And drives his elephant in lordly state ;
 One lives in love ; one girdled round with hate
 Dwells ever in a bitter world of strife ;
 One in the moment of this earthly life
 Is ruler, sitting on a regal seat ;
 One crawls a slave, obedient at his feet.

And Allah changes all as He desires,
 He is an artist whom His art inspires :
 This world the picture He is painting still.
 But with his share of fate He gave man will
 To fashion circumstance by its control,
 To make a path of healing for his soul,
 To act, to think, to feel aright until
 He knows his will as one with Allah's will.

Inayat Khan.

TANSEN

TANSEN, the singer, in great Akbar's Court
Won great renown ; through the Badshahi Fort
His voice rang like the sound of silver bells
And Akbar ravished heard. The story tells
How the King praised him, gave him many a
gem,

Called him chief jewel in his diadem.

One day the singer sang the Song of Fire,
The Deepak *Râg*, and burning like a pyre
His body burst into consuming flame.

To cure his burning heart a maiden came
And sang Malhar, the song of water cold,
Till health returned, and comfort as of old.

"Mighty thy Teacher must be and divine,"
Great Akbar said ; "magic indeed is thine,
Learnt at his feet." Then happy Tansen bowed
And said, "Beyond the world's ignoble crowd,
Scorning its wealth, remote and far-away
He dwells within a cave of Himalay."

"Could I but see him once," desired the King,

"Sit at his feet awhile, and listening
Hear his celestial song, I would deny
My state and walk in robes of poverty."

Then said Tansen, "As you desire, Huzoor,
Indeed 'twere better as a slave and poor
To come ; for he, lifted above the things

Of earth, disdains to sing to earthly kings.”
Long was the road, and Akbar as a slave
Followed Tansen who rode towards the cave
High in the mountains. At the singer’s feet
They knelt and prayed with supplication sweet :
“ Towards thy shrine, lo, we have journeyed
long,

O Holy Master, bless us with thy song ! ”
Then Ostad, won by their humility,
Sang songs of peace and high felicity ;
The Malkous *Raga* all ecstatic rang
Till birds and beasts, enchanted as he sang,
Gathered to hear. O’er Akbar’s dreaming soul
He felt the waves of heavenly rapture roll,
But, as he turned to speak his words of praise,
Ostad had vanished from his wondering gaze.
“ Tell me, Tansen, what theme this is that holds
The soul enchanted, and the heart enfolds
In high delight ” ; and, when he knew the
name,
“ Tell me,” again he said, “ could you the same
Theme sing to lure my heart to paths untrod ? ”
“ Ah no, to thee I sing ; he sings to God.”

Inayat Khan.

THE high ambition of the drop of rain
Is to be merged in the unfettered sea ;
My sorrow when it passed all bounds of pain,
Changing, became itself the remedy.

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Behold how great is my humility !

Under your cruel yoke I suffered sore ;
Now I no longer feel thy tyranny,
I hunger for the pain that then I bore.

Why did the fragrance of the flowers outflow
If not to breathe with benediction sweet
Across her path ? Why did the soft wind blow
If not to kiss the ground before her feet ?
Ghalib.

How difficult is the thorny way of strife
That man hath stumbled in since time began !
And in the tangled business of this life
How difficult to play the part of man !

When she decrees there should exist no more
My humble cottage, through its broken walls,
And cruelly drifting in the open door,
The frozen rain of desolation falls.

O mad Desire, why dost thou flame and burn
And bear my soul further and further yet
To the Belovéd ? Then, why dost thou turn
To bitter disappointment and regret ?

Such light there gleams from the Belovéd's face
That every eye becomes her worshipper,
And every mirror, looking on her grace,
Desires to be the frame enclosing her.

Unhappy lovers, slaves of cruel chance,
In this grim place of slaughter strange indeed
Your joy to see unveiled her haughty glance
That flashes like the scimitar of Ede.

When I had hardly drawn my latest breath,
Pardon she asked for killing me. Alas !
How soon repentance followed on my death,
How quick her unavailing sorrow was !

Ghalib.

Thy beauty flashes like a sword
Serene and keen and merciless ;
But great as is thy cruelty,
Even greater is thy loveliness.

It is the gift of God to thee,
This beauty rare and exquisite ;
Why dost thou hide it thus from me ?
I shall not steal nor sully it.

And as thy beauty shines, in Heaven
There climbs upon its path of fire
The star that lights my rival's way,
And with it mounts his heart's desire.

Even in thy house is jealousy,
Thy youth demands the lover's praise
Over thy beauty, which itself
Is jealous of thy gracious ways.

I died with joy when winningly
I heard the Well-Beloved call—
Zahir, where is my beauty gone ?
Thou must have robbed me after all.

Zahir.

I SHALL not try to flee the sword of Death,
Nor, fearing it, a watchful vigil keep ;
It will be nothing but a sigh, a breath,
A turning on the other side to sleep.

Through all the close entanglements of earth
My spirit shaking off its bonds shall fare
And pass, and rise in new unfettered birth,
Escaping from this labyrinth of care.

Within the mortal caravanseraï
No rest and no abiding place I know ;
I linger here for but a fleeting day,
And at the morrow's summoning I go.

What are these bonds that try to shackle me ?
Through all their intricate chains my way I
find ;

I travel like a wandering melody
That floats untamed, untaken, on the wind.

From an unsympathetic world I flee
To you, your love and fellowship I crave,
O Singers dead, Sauda and Mushafi,
I lay my song as tribute on your grave.

Amir.

VOICE IN THE AIR

The vaulted roof opens. The guests feel that a Being is entering from above. They see nothing, but all hear a voice in the air.

HIGH above the clouds in the Home of Light I dwell.

My days are passed in the peace of Great Understanding.

For their welfare do I visit men in all corners of the earth.

At the command of the Mother I move, up and down, East and West, showering the rays of Freedom upon all ;

The Mother is the Circle, I am but a curve ;

The Mother is the Whole, I am but a part ;

The Mother is the Opening Lotus, I am but a single petal ;

The Mother is the Ocean of Honey, I am but a thirsty bee.

Men call me Lord of the Sky and Father of the Heavens. They know naught who speak thus.

I am the Space and its all-infilling Light and the sight in Man's eyes which sees them both ;

I am the Sense whereby Man knows the Quarters ;

I dwell in peace, encompassing all these living orbs of light ;

I know the secret of the Primal Song ; the gods
are all the offspring of a Song, by them un-
heard ;

I keep the record of men's thoughts in my infinite
House of Sky ;

From æon to æon I hold up the Mirror of Thought
to each man's mind, to lead him across the
shoreless Sea of Mirage ;

Yet I do but the bidding of the Mother of Eternal
Power ;

I am in all hearts, save only those where Love is
not.

*The Being rises up through the open roof, and
the guests hear his voice dying away in the far-off
sky. The vault of the Hall closes. The southern
door opens. A Being enters. They hear his voice.*

VOICE IN THE AIR :

By the will of the Mother I am the Lord of the
Air ;

I reign over all who breathe ;

I carry sweet fragrance from ocean to ocean ;

My song is heard in the mountain forest, but
men hear not my music in the clouds ;

My home is near to the Lord of the Heart ;

I am the Lord of Life's Brother and Playmate ;

I walk with Man from the door of Birth to the
door of Death ; waking and sleeping, by day
and by night, I watch over him ;

I sweep from Pole to Pole and none can with-
stand my power ;

I am the Friend of the Flowers—from one to another I bear sweet messages of love ;
This all I do at the command of the Mother of Life.

There stands the Mother tenderly smiling, filling with sweetness the Quarters of the Heavens.
Yea, like a spreading mountain pine She stands in the soft autumn twilight, and it pleases Her that I play upon my reed for the comfort of all creatures that breathe.

The light dies out, leaving the Hall in darkness. After a while a kind of murky earth-light diffuses itself over the lower part of the Hall. The guests hear the sound of a mighty crying, like the wailing of a sacked city in the far distance. A voice, broken by sighs and groans, speaks from below.

VOICE :

I come. Ye ask, " Who art thou ? " Gods have not named me. I call myself " Humanity " ;
I dwell on land and in the seas ; I sweep through the air and the ether.

I am man and woman and the intermediate one ;
I am the ape and the tiger and the lamb.

I wander in the woods of dark continents as the savage cannibal ; I watch by the bedside of the sick in the home of mercy.

I am ferocity in the beast of prey ; I am compassion in the heart of the mother.

I devour my own offspring ; I sacrifice myself to
save others.

I change—every moment, every season, every
æon ;

I fill the pages of my history with romances
written in blood ;

Out of my dreams of heaven I create this earth ;

I wax strong and wage war to please Death ;

I laugh at Death and hurl him into the flaming
furnace of hell—and this I do to please my
children.

I enter the portals of Life with strong crying—
and with a sigh I bid farewell to Life.

I am prophet ; I am idiot ;

I am king and shepherd and fisherman.

I put my foot on the neck of kings and shepherds
and fishermen and turn them into dust ;

And with their dust do I besmear myself and
madly dance over green meadows.

I am—what ye fear to think of me ; I will be—
what ye love to dream of me.

But I will baffle all your fond expectations and
all your clever calculations ;

In a moment of infinite time I will take the whole
world by the hand and lift it up to the heaven
of my heart.

I am the most erring of the High Mother's children,
but one sure instinct I possess—I stand erect
the moment I fall, and by the aid of the very
obstacle that caused my fall do I rise again.

I sorrow not over my shortcomings and my sufferings ;

I hope—yet know that my hopes are too wild to be realised.

In a part of Space called the Corner of Pain I have made my home ;

I breathe the atmosphere of pain—I drink from the well of pain—I eat the fruits of the tree of pain—my sleep is troubled by the dream of pain.

I love not Pain—Pain loves me ;

The whole history of my existence is a constant fleeing from this cruel lover of mine ;

I have prayed to God to be delivered from him—has He heard my prayer ?

I have worshipped a million lesser divinities—nature-gods, man-gods, god-gods—throughout the ages, hoping to be relieved of pain—have they saved me ?

I have believed in prophets, saviours, saints—have they healed me ?

I have listened to philosophers, scientists, magicians—have they protected me ?

Kings, statesmen, law-givers have boldly proclaimed the gospel of peace and security—have they not themselves plunged the poisoned dagger into my heart ?

I am old as Eternity—yet I feel not the burden of eternal years ;

I am young as the babe of to-day—yet I am wise
as all the hoary Bible-makers of all the races
of the earth.

I am one—I am many ; I am spirit, ghost, man,
animal, and tree : yet my hidden life flows
ever with passionate impetuosity towards
the distant future above the heads of
nations.

To me the least is not less than the greatest ; in
all I am their sensitiveness to pain—the pain
of a perpetual new birth of cosmos or of
chaos.

I am large, and my largeness moves me to face
great pain for the avoiding of great pain ;

I am strong, and my strength lies in discovering
the source of consolation even in the moment
of suffering from suffering itself ;

I am inured to pain—so that I delight in excitement
that brings pain and inflicts pain.

Who brought this pain upon me ? Had it been
God-given, God would one day have taken
it away ; has He taken it away ?

Had it been the gift of Nature, I would have
revenged myself upon her ; but I feel no
enmity to Nature—I desire that she be
endless, infinite, that I may ever conquer
her ;

I desire to be charmed by her—yet to be her
master ; I wonder, shall I ever wish to end
this play ?

Deeming myself the mother of my pain, I seek the aid of floods and earthquakes, war and pestilence and famine, to bring destruction on myself ; but ever by a mysterious magic I rise from my own ashes and live again ; and after my resurrection, sitting in the dawn-light by the waveless ocean, Psyche comes and whispers to my heart : “ Not thou, O sweet Humanity, art cause of thine own pain ! ”

And I muse : If I be the father of my sufferings, how can I desire to live again ? How can I inflict pain upon myself ? How can I construct machinery for my own torture ?

I know that my nature is rooted in contradiction ; have I perhaps sought to grow at the cost of happiness and peace ?

Bright Powers in the heavens are watching over my mysterious destiny. Have they lauded me as good and true and beautiful ? Have they condemned me as bad and false and ugly ? Who will say whether I am developing aright ? Who will say whether the daily use to which I am constrained to put my life is not frustrating the Eternal Purpose ?

I am left alone with my unforeseeing understanding and my ever forward-springing untamable energy.

My knowledge embraces not the whole reality.
Perchance my sensitiveness to pain has
sprung from my limited uncomprehending
understanding. True, in my own eyes I
grow from ugliness to beauty, from ignorance
to knowledge, from slavery to freedom, from
sin to holiness. I make progress in culture
and civilisation—but I rise to the zenith
only to descend to the nadir.

Henceforth I will seek new and inward space for
my progress. In the coming age I will
seek to bore a tunnel in the spirit, to find an
inner path to the Divinity of my Heart.
But I will not destroy the bridges which I
have built during the past ages, linking
this earth with the distant divinity of suns
and moons and stars.

I will be free, glorious, and immortal.

The Voice ceases.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.

ALL this is rhythm.

May-fields, child-hearts, evening skies,

Grow corn and wisdom and stars

By the throb of rhythm ;

And Muses from the Milky Way

Nightly visit

The sleeping poet's downy pillow

By the law of rhythm ;

And angels bring him faces

Flushed with morning's rose,
Tinted with even's quiet,
By the sweet impulse of rhythm.
Wait, O soul !
Outside thy door, upon the green,
Heaven stands expectant,
Waiting to be ushered in
By Rhythm,
Just now—or perchance to-morrow.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.
From " Usarika."

FRIEND, dwell thou
within my ruby-lotus heart of dreams ;
Friend, see thyself
in the diamond mirror of my heart of hopes ;
Friend, sport with me
in the garden-walks of my heart, fringed with
everlastings ;
Friend, sleep thou on the shore of the song-
throated ocean of my heart ;
Friend, shine in me
like sunlight in the heart of a rose-bud of jade.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.
From " Usarika."

THOU art the rose,
I am the honey ;
Thou drinkest the light
of the four heavens,

And my soul is suffused
with the rainbow of seven tints ;
I give myself
to the bees
And become a song
on the wings of winds
that sing to the gods
and the fleecy clouds
and the sleeping children of Life.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.

From " Usarika " (Dawn-Rhythms).

SNOW-BLOSSOMS,
snow-blossoms,
Are
you alive ?

In your heart
I see
the image
of
the heavens,
the disc
of
the sun,

And
when clouds
veil

the face
of
the sky
I see
your facets
tinted
with
the ink
of
dark sorrow.

Children of Varun,
sweet guests
of
late Autumn,
you too
hear
the whispers
of
Immortality.

Like
our village sons,
dwelling
in
lighted cottages
by
the gloom-canopied
graves
of

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their departed
ancestors.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.
From "Saki" (The Comrade).

THE
rose of eternity
is
my heart,
the
sun-gold honey
is
my love
for
my Saki,
the
honey-bees
are
my sighs and songs,
the
river
is
my feeling
of
life,
and
the light
of
my Saki's
eyes

is
the true life
of
the red rose.

What
grey dews
or
blind canker
can harm
this
ever-smiling
rose
of
my heart ?

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.

From “ Saki.”

THE blue
of
Indra
is
thy laughter
frozen
into
the
sky-ocean
and
these stars

and
this earth
are
frozen lilies
and
we
living creatures
are
frozen bees.

O Saki,
laugh
no
more.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.
From "Saki."

THE shadow
of
a
flying bird
across
the
sun's disc
fell
on
the
still floor
of
my morning-quiet

cave
and
vanished—

Like
the memory
of
one
who
passing
through
the
bright shade
of
my garden trees
of
early days
entered
into
the
deep shadows
of
another's
garden trees.

Śrī Ānanda Āchārya.

From “ Saki.”

LOVE'S *SAMĀDHI*¹

AH, Love, I sink in the timeless sleep,
 Sink in the timeless sleep ;
 One Image stands before my eyes,
 And thrills my bosom's deep :
 One Vision bathes in radiant light
 My spirit's palace-halls ;
 All stir of hand, all throb of brain,
 Quivers, and sinks, and falls.
 My soul fares forth ; no fetters now
 Chain me to this world's shore.
 Sleep ! I would sleep ! In pity spare ;
 Let no man wake me more !
Nārāyan Vāman Tilak.

A CRADLE SONG

HUSH thee, hush thee, baby Christ,
 Lord of all mankind,—
 Thou the happy lullaby
 Of my mind.

Hush thee, hush thee, Jesus, Lord,
 Stay of all that art,—
 Thou the happy lullaby
 Of my heart.

¹ *Samādhi* is the mystic's "ecstasy," in which all consciousness of the material world is lost and the soul is face to face with the Real,

Hush thee, hush thee, home of peace,—
Lo ! Love lying there !—
Thou the happy lullaby
Of my care.

Hush thee, hush thee, Soul of mine,
Setting all men free—
Thou the happy lullaby
Of the whole of me.

Nārāyan Vāman Tilak.

THE WAY OF POVERTY

THOU hadst no servants to attend on Thee ;
Then why this pomp of household state for me ?
Coarse fare and scanty was Thy portion, Lord ;
Then why for me this richly-furnished board ?
Thou hadst not where to lay Thy head to rest ;
Then why should I of mansions be possessed ?
Ah, hapless I ! What is this tyranny ?
How dost Thou laugh and make a mock of me !
Ah, take from me this burden that doth bow
My head ! blest ocean of all love art Thou !
I speak in anger, Lord ; yet, if Thou too
Reject my prayer, what can Thy servant do ?
Saith Dāsa, Christ, upon Thy pallet-bed
Grant me a little space to lay my head.

Nārāyan Vāman Tilak.

THE LAST PRAYER

LAY me within Thy lap to rest ;
Around my head Thine arm entwine ;
Let me gaze up into Thy face,
O Father-Mother mine !

So let my spirit pass with joy,
Now at the last, O Tenderest !
Saith Dāsa, Grant Thy wayward child
This one, this last request.
Nārāyan Vāman Tilak.

UNION WITH CHRIST

As the moon and its beams are one,
So that I be one with Thee,
This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord,
This is this beggar's plea.

I would snare Thee and hold Thee ever,
In loving wifely ways ;
I give Thee a daughter's welcome,
I give Thee a sister's praise.

As words and their meaning are linked,
Serving one purpose each,
Be Thou and I so knit, O Lord,
And through me breathe Thy speech,

O be my soul a mirror clear,
That I may see Thee there ;
Dwell in my thought, my speech, my life,
Making them glad and fair.

Take Thou this body, O my Christ,
Dwell as its soul within ;
To be an instant separate
I count a deadly sin.

Nārāyan Vāman Tilak.

PEACE

It is the hour of sunset, and the sky
Is robed in purple, as a lovely bride
With ruby lips and veil thrown half aside,
Waiting for her sweet lord with longing eye.
The air is fresh and fragrant, and the sea
In smiling joy its boundless bosom heaves,
With ringing music of the rising waves ;
And far from here its weary whisper leaves
The broken echo of a world that raves ;
Its murmur hushed in new-born notes of glee.

Lulled by the laughter of the sky and earth,
The heart forgets her sorrow and suspends
Her breath in silent rapture and descends
Upon the soul the vision of its birth.
Immeasurable waters ! and the sky
Immeasurable ! and this wondrous light

In rainbow smiles of India, all around—
Resting and rocking and rolling in delight,
And swelling with the mirth of many a sound
That fills the ocean's ears unceasingly.

And now the mantle of approaching night
Falls gently o'er the drowsy eyes of day ;
The roseate glow of evening melts away,
Softly beyond the western waves, to white.
Now o'er the earth a veil of mystery
In silver silence all around is spread ;
And not a sound is heard or sight is seen
Except the lingering echoes hither led
Of boatmen's shouts, and distant lights between
The mingling bosoms of the sky and sea.

The moon hath risen, and the stars appear,
And heaven is watching with the eyes of light ;
And in my heart a newer hope is bright
With varied splendours of the atmosphere.
The mind is hushed and all its motions cease
Of wayward fancy and unquiet thought ;
And in the happy island of the soul
Awakes a joy in radiance unforgot—
Which o'er the world's tumultuous uncontrol
Doth smile, and softly whisper, " Here is Peace ! "

Nanikram Vasannal Thadani.